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**Sent:** Mon 3/30/2015 11:57:01 AM  
**Subject:** VI Incident News

## **Delaware Headmaster, Family Remain in Hospital After Possible Pesticide Poisoning in Virgin Islands**

By David Chang

NBC Philly

**Updated at 11:01 AM EDT on Saturday, Mar 28, 2015**

The head of a Delaware middle school and his wife are slowly recovering but their children remain critical more than a week after they were sickened, possibly by a pesticide, during a vacation in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Stephen Esmond, his wife Dr. Theresa Devine and their two teen sons were staying at the Sirenusa Condominium Resort in Cruz Bay, St. John, on Friday, March 20 when they suddenly became ill, suffering major respiratory trauma.

The family was eventually taken to hospitals in the Philadelphia area. Esmond and his wife are in serious condition while their two sons are in critical condition.

Esmond is the headmaster of Tatnall's Middle School in Wilmington while Dr. Devine is a local dentist. Their two teen sons attend Tatnall's high school.

### **Delaware Family Possibly Poisoned by Pesticide on Vacation**

A vacation away should be relaxing, but one local family went into major respiratory trauma after possibly being exposed to toxic chemicals in their St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands rental. NBC10's Tim Furlong has the latest on what is now a federal investigation. (Published Tuesday, Mar 24, 2015)

Officials with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are investigating whether the family was sickened by a pesticide called methyl bromide. EPA officials say the pesticide may have been used to fumigate a room at the resort back on March 18, the same day the family checked in.

The use of methyl bromide is restricted in the United States because of its acute toxicity, according to the EPA. The pesticide is not authorized for use in buildings and only certified applicators are allowed to be used in certain agricultural settings.

Exposure to methyl bromide can cause damage to the central nervous system and respiratory system.

"Pesticides can be very toxic and it is critically important that they be applied properly and used only as approved by EPA," said Judith A. Enck, EPA Regional Administrator. "Protecting people's health in the U.S. Virgin Islands is of paramount importance. The EPA is actively working to determine how this happened and will make sure steps are taken to prevent this from happening to others at these vacation apartments or elsewhere."

Charlie Tierney, the head of School at Tatnall, also released a statement on Esmond and his family.

"The Tatnall School family is sending its well-wishes and love to the Esmonds," Tierney wrote. "We will continue to offer our prayers and positive, healing thoughts and support them in any way we can."

### **Family still critically ill after poisoning ordeal, says friend**

BY ALDETH LEWIN (VI DAILY NEWS STAFF)

Published: March 28, 2015

ST. THOMAS - The vacationing family from Delaware who officials suspect were poisoned by a dangerous pesticide still are in critical condition.

The family's spokesman, Delaware attorney James Maron, issued a written statement Friday saying that all four family members - Stephen Esmond; his wife, Theresa Devine; and their two teenage sons, Sean and Ryan - remain hospitalized in the states.

"Stephen, Sean and Ryan remain in critical condition. Theresa's condition has improved," Maron said.

The family had rented Villa Capri at Sirenusa Condominium Resort on St. John from March 14 through Sunday.

On March 20, the family was transported to Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas for medical treatment. During the next few days, each of them was airlifted to the mainland for additional medical treatment.

The V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency have launched an investigation into the incident as a possible chemical poisoning.

Monday, the agencies indicated a pesticide containing methyl bromide, improperly used by Terminix in a unit adjacent to the Esmond family's rental, likely made the family sick.

The EPA and DPNR investigators collected samples from the units this week and have sent them out for testing at an EPA-certified laboratory.

In the meantime, DPNR has issued two stop use orders to Terminix, one for each district, to

stop using any product containing methyl bromide and to quarantine any of the chemical that may be in the company's possession.

"Family members are grateful for the prayers and support of friends and loved ones," Maron said in a written statement. "The family believes Stephen, Theresa, Sean and Ryan are in good hands medically and ask that the public continue to respect their privacy at this time."

## **Chemical Poisoned Family Still in Stateside Hospitals**

VI SOURCE

BY LYNDA LOHR — MARCH 27, 2015

The four members of a vacationing Delaware family sickened by the apparent use of a pesticide containing methyl bromide at Sirenusa condominiums on St. John remain in stateside hospitals, their attorney, James J. Maron, said in a press release issued Friday.

He said that Stephen Esmond and children Sean and Ryan remain in critical condition at unspecified stateside hospitals. Dr. Theresa Devine rounds out the family, and Maron said that her condition has improved.

According to Maron, family members are grateful for the prayers and support of "friends and loved ones."

He said the Esmonds are in good hands medically and asked that their privacy be respected.

The Esmonds got sick March 20 after the St. Thomas-based Terminix sprayed a pesticide containing methyl bromide in another room at Sirenusa.

After treatment at Roy L. Schneider Hospital, the Esmonds were airlifted to mainland hospitals.

Maron is an attorney with Maron, Marvel, Bradley and Anderson, a firm that specializes in "complex mass toxic tort and environmental litigation," its website indicates.

This incident prompted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources to launch an investigation into the matter. This week DPNR issued Stop Use orders to Terminix to prevent the company from continuing to use the pesticide.

Planning spokesman Jamal Nielsen said there wasn't anything new since Thursday's announcement of the latest in two Stop Use orders.

EPA spokesman Elias Rodriguez said Friday afternoon that testing continues at Sirenusa.

**(And FYI)**

Press Release

Published: Mar 13, 2015 1:07 p.m. ET

## **Terminix Announces Acquisition of Diversified Exterminators**

### **The Pest Control Leader Expands Presence in Hawaii**

MEMPHIS, TN, Mar 13, 2015 (Marketwired via COMTEX) -- Terminix®<sup>®</sup>, the leading provider of termite and pest control services in the United States, today announced the acquisition of the assets of Diversified Exterminators, a residential and commercial pest control company specializing in fumigation services on the Hawaiian Islands.

Diversified Exterminators, headquartered in Honolulu, was established by the late Mohinder Maan in 1972 and is the largest locally-owned pest control company on Oahu. The company's workforce is well-known for providing customers with timely service and solutions for the treatment of termites, ants, fleas, rodents, birds, cockroaches and unique pests native to the state.

"The acquisition of Diversified Exterminators expands our already strong footprint on the Hawaiian Islands," said Bill Derwin, president of Terminix. "We continually search for companies that mirror our focus on excellent customer service, professionalism and the potential for growth. We're pleased to welcome this strong company to the growing Terminix family."

Terminix has seen substantial growth in Hawaii since entering the state in the 1940s. With the Diversified Exterminators purchase, Terminix now operates a total of seven branches across the islands. The acquisition is part of Terminix's strategy to expand its footprint and increase penetration in North America. Company officials said it will not have a material impact on its first-quarter or full-year 2015 financial results.

#### **About Terminix®**

Terminix is the leading provider of termite and pest control services in the United States. Headquartered in Memphis, Tenn., Terminix services approximately 2.8 million residential and commercial customers in 47 states and 22 countries. Terminix provides pest control services and protection against termites, rodents and other pests threatening human health and/or safety. Terminix is a business unit of ServiceMaster Global Holdings, Inc. SERV, +2.32% a leading provider of essential residential and commercial services. To learn more about Terminix, visit [www.Terminix.com](http://www.Terminix.com).

#### **About ServiceMaster®**

ServiceMaster Global Holdings, Inc. SERV, +2.32% is a leading provider of essential residential and commercial services, operating through an extensive service network of more than 8,000 company-owned, franchised and licensed locations. The company's portfolio of well-recognized brands includes Terminix (termite and pest control), American Home Shield (home warranties), ServiceMaster Restore (disaster restoration), ServiceMaster Clean (janitorial), Merry Maids

(residential cleaning), Furniture Medic (furniture repair) and AmeriSpec (home inspections). We serve residential and commercial customers through an employee base of approximately 13,000 company associates and a franchise network that independently employs an estimated 33,000 additional people. The company is headquartered in Memphis, Tenn. Go to [www.servicemaster.com](http://www.servicemaster.com) for more information about ServiceMaster or follow the company at [twitter.com/ServiceMaster](https://twitter.com/ServiceMaster) or [facebook.com/TheServiceMasterCo](https://facebook.com/TheServiceMasterCo).

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